PS 2964
.S27
Copy 1

MISTAKES: A POEM,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Enosinian and Philophrenian Societies

OF

COLUMBIAN COLLEGE,

ON THEIR

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, APRIL 12, 1860,

AT THE

Hall of the Smithsonian Institution.

BY REV. B. SUNDERLAND, D. D.

WASHINGTON:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETIES.
1860.

MISTAKES: A POEM,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Enosinian and Philophrenian Societies

OF

COLUMBIAN COLLEGE,

ON THEIR

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION, APRIL 12, 1860,

AT THE

Hall of the Smithsonian Institution.

BY REV. B. SUNDERLAND, D. D.

33

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
U. S. A.
CITY OF WASHINGTON

WASHINGTON:
PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETIES.
1860.

PS 2964
.S27

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1860, by

THOMAS McGILL,

in the Clerk's office of the District Court of the United States for the District of Columbia.

THOMAS M'GILL, PRINTER.

CORRESPONDENCE.

COLUMBIAN COLLEGE, D. C.,
April 16th, 1860.

REV. BYRON SUNDERLAND, D. D.:

DEAR SIR: The Enosinian and Philophrenian Literary Societies of this College have instructed us to express to you their thanks for the interesting Poem read before them at the Smithsonian Institution on the 12th inst., the occasion of their late annual celebration. We are also instructed by our Societies to request a copy of your Poem for publication.

Hoping you will gratify this desire, we remain,

Very respectfully, yours,

A. L. BOND,
A. M. McCLENNY,
J. W. CLAMPITT,
T. C. L. HATCHER,
SAMUEL FORRER,
J. M. ROANE,
Committee of Arrangements.

WASHINGTON, *April 26th*, 1860.

TO A. L. BOND AND OTHERS, GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMITTEE:

Your favor of the 16th inst. came duly to hand. As the Poem to which you refer was first delivered under the auspices of the Literary Societies you represent, I submit a copy of it to your disposal; at the same time thanking you for the kindness with which you have been pleased to receive the performance.

Very truly, &c.,

B. SUNDERLAND.

——But to return to the verses:
Did they please you, Sir Nathaniel?

L. L. L., Act 4, Scene 2.

MISTAKES.

A maiden Muse comes forth, good friends, to-night,
All in a tremor of confusing fright,
Such presentation, as she can, to make,
Not of those airy forms our fancies take,
But, cramped and crooked with their pains and aches,
The more unlucky and ill-starred *Mistakes!*

And first of all, one favor would we ask,
In this prim office of an usher's task,
Like little Tully, from whose speech we quote,
A speech that all the school-boys know by rote,
We pray—"don't view us with a critic's eye,"
Oh no!—"but pass our imperfections by."

"Mistakes will happen," so the proverb teaches,
"Mistakes will happen," everybody preaches;
Whoe'er denies it, reasons not sedately,
For one mistake has happened very lately:

These sharp Collegians—'tis but fair to know it—
Have slily served a preacher for a poet!

By bland inducements, gingerly presented,
In evil hour the Theologue consented,
That famous horse, the Pegasus, bestriding,
To risk his neck, the wild passade abiding,
Though all unconscious what exceeding dangers
Attend the feat, especially with strangers!
In truth, the steed is never less than antic,
But with the clergy on his back—he 's frantic!

The barb that bore the breathless Tam O'Shanter,
Compared with him, took but a gentle canter;
The prouder Ukraine, with Mazeppa flying,
While on his track the gaunt grey wolves were crying,
Through all the chase—though in a furious nettle,
Still matched him not in fierce and fractious mettle.

Oh, none can guess with what a deal of petting,
Caressing, coaxing, dancing, fuming, fretting,
Of rearing, plunging, leaping wide and wider,
The vicious brute has brought his luckless rider!
'T would not be strange if, after such a flouncing,
And such a ruthless, unpropitious jouncing,
Though one were full of brains as Jove's Minerva,
He finds his wits all tumbled topsy-turvy.

Yet here we are, brim full of apprehension,
To crave your earnest and profound attention,
While we, with motions somewhat like a twister's,
Unwind the legend of the sorry sisters.

Mistakes—what are they?—what their source and nature,
Their use, their number and their nomenclature?

'Tis said, one day a crusty old curmudgeon,
Of yore called Error, either in high dudgeon,
Or else to cure a freak of melancholy,
Espoused a damsel by the name of Folly;
And ever since 'twould try the son of Venus,
To trace or count the everlasting genus.
The lineage grows with every generation;
The race has widened into every nation;
The line, in its direct descent deflected,
Is with a host of kindred tribes connected.

Thus evermore their blazonry grows vaster,
And thus these crippled daughters of disaster
Are reinforced by forty thousand legions,
From native Gotham through most distant regions.
Yet in this famous circle of relations,
What seems a marvel past one's expectations,
There is one Uncle only, whom, by right of
Full-blooded title, they 've e'er had the sight of:

A world-renowned and universal doctor,
A meddling scamp, an omnipresent proctor,
With many fearful, sinister cognomens,
Suggesting dismal and portentous omens,
But for the most part, in his countless capers,
Ycleped "Bad-Luck," and sometimes "Awful Papers"
This Jack-at-all-trades, it is well reported,
One dame Misfortune in his youth had courted;
And from that day they 've jogged along together,
A sad old couple, through all kinds of weather.

So from their first affinities descending,
In due degrees, the motley clans are blending.
They boast for brothers, those especial wonders,
Those glorious blades, the noted troops of Blunders;
Then come, in crowds congenital, their cousins,
Mishaps, Mischances, by the hundred dozens;
While swarms of Posers, fraught with all vexation,
Complete and close the grand conglomeration.

Then should we note their contradictious features,
Mistakes, of all things, are most curious creatures.
In sole companionship with man and woman,
They are for this world most expressly human.
And though they seem the children of one mother,
They are meanwhile the aunties of each other;
And though 'tis false, or inconsistent rather,

They often claim their uncle for their father!
So antithetic are they, and capricious,
In range so broad, in mood so meretricious,
Through all their ranks, from titan to atomic—
In all their grades, from tragical to comic—
'Tis hard to say which quality of evil
Was chief or foremost, in their state primeval.

Some seem so huge, and some so very slender,
Some are so tough, and others are so tender,
Some look so sheepish, others are so rigid,
Some seem so funny, others are so frigid,
Some prove so clumsy, others are so rapid,
Some are quite witty, others seem so vapid,
Some look so dogged, others are so shabby,
Some seem so moody, others prove so crabby,
Some are so doleful, some extremely silly,
And some are stiff as starchen piccadilly!

Now if we turn from these heraldic sketches,
To scan the metaphysics of the wretches,
A field looms up, remarkably imposing,
Alike for poetizing and for prosing.
The truth is plain, as we shall doubtless find it,
Mistakes are made when folks have not designed it;
Mistakes fly forth, as from Pandora's casket,
When none intended, none proposed to ask it;

Mistakes pop up, in frightful paradoxes,
Like mimic goblins from a juggler's boxes!

So while one dreams the tide is smoothly flowing,
And gently glides the gondola he 's rowing,
Released from care, no stealthy sorrow fearing,
With pleasant comrades, o'er the current veering,
Then swift there springs, as facile as a bubble,
Some fell mistake, to cause a new-born trouble.
Thus in all phases of life's wondrous riddle,
Mistakes come bouncing plump into the middle!

If then, we would define them still more nicely,
A pure mistake is not a fault precisely;
A pure mistake is not exactly sinning,
But some mistakes come very nigh beginning;
Or 'tis maphap some species of abusage,
Through inadvertence, or some strange misusage;
A pure mistake no moral wrong is rated,
Though as mistakes all crimes are estimated.
And there be things which, like the frog or lizard,
Appear, as by some spell of witch or wizard,
Of double habit and amphibious function,
Now apathetic, now of deep compunction.

Thus, when two gossips, holding conversation,
In some sly corner, safe from observation,

With grateful zest their genial trade pursuing,
Conceive some scandal, which they set to brewing;
And then, with pious, persevering labor,
Each vies to show the secret to his neighbor;
So that by broad, unblushing crimination,
Or by suppressed and dark insinuation,
With doubtful nods suspicious points contrasting,
On some fair name, they ply the work of blasting;
Or, bent on mischief more refined and cruel,
O'er fires already kindled, heap their fuel;
Till so betimes old friends are cast asunder,
And Rumor's harpies hasten to their plunder;
While social concord, marked for devastation,
Expires and sinks before the conflagration:
The question is, in rightly analyzing
This stress of virtue, by such deep surmising,
Did these shrewd dabsters in the art of babbling,
These long-tongued spinsters at their game of gabbling,
Thus through a sheer mistake—a passing trifle—
The priceless treasure of our nature rifle?
Or shall their deed, so merciless and painful,
So fraught with fruit remedilessly baneful,
By every rule of moral calculation,
Be deemed a base and black assassination?

Or, when the Member from a given section
Forgets the pledges made before election,

And, towering upward like a country steeple,
Anon betrays a too confiding people,
And counts his promise lighter than a feather:
The question is, in such a matter, whether
The sovereigns made a sad mistake in voting,
And chose a villain who deserves garroting?
Or, as a joke, the thing should pass in laughter,
And as before, the man be honored, after?

Or, when it chances on a new-year's morning,
Some dandiprat, the vulgar rabble scorning,
Starts out, replete with freshest affectations,
To make the circuit of his gratulations;
And, sprucely joining Fashion's grand committee
Of bearded bipeds roving through the city,
With brilliant hopes and visions bright, before him,
Of fair young creatures, who he knows adore him—
As bold as Cæsar in the sternest crises,
Brave as the pious son of old Anchises,
And sporting all the poetry of motion,
He dashes forward through the day's devotion;
While gentle Didos, loving as their gender,
Await his coming in their halls of splendor—
And maids and matrons show, by warmest greeting,
Their sense profound of such distinguished meeting—
While he entranced is held, like poor Ulysses,
A captive bound, by scores of siren Misses,

Who, tripping through the wonted common-places,
Display the charms of all their blushing graces;
Until at last, enforced by sweet coercion,
Which, truth to say, begets him no aversion,
He fondly crowns the soft confabulation
In phrases measured with each full potation;
For being no tee-total, antique fossil,
But straight concurring in the season's wassail,
Mayhap withal to nerve his flagging body,
In hourly swigs he punishes the toddy!
And when toward night-fall, by some blind revulsion,
Some stubborn fate of singular impulsion,
His sight becoming rather obtuse-angled,
His pedal members getting somewhat tangled,
And first on right, then left, adroitly perching,
His upper story, like a brig, seems lurching,
Till, taking one grand final reel, he pitches
Along the outcast garbage of the ditches:
The question is—pray listen to it, ladies—
Of that sublime performance what the grade is?
Was it a brick or billet sent him sprawling,
Adown the gutter so supinely falling?
Was it by pure mistake a passing shoulder,
Just for the moment, struck him like a boulder,
And made him thus unwittingly to rollic?
Or, was the booby in a drunken frolic?
Whatever be the rightful explanation,

In such a scene of manhood's degradation,
O gentle sex, please you, do not upbraid him!
For what he is, perchance, yourselves have made him.

So too, when doting parents, grown ambitious,
Or touched with motives slightly avaricious,
Despising meekly all employments rural,
'Mid city grandeurs splendid, vast, and mural,
Have found their son a proper situation
In some old hunker-house of importation;
And when at last the nice young man 's detected
In making entries that must be corrected,
Not from the ledgers and the honest dockets,
But from his own almost insolvent pockets:
The question is, was it, beyond concealing,
A downright piece of roguery and stealing?
Or was it by a mere mistake, the spelter,
Not in the safe, but in his fob, found shelter?

Or, on a scale more lofty, and demanding
A wider range of human understanding,
A sounder sense, a judgment more substantial,
A keener insight into things financial,
Where fiscal genius finds its satisfaction,
And grand adventures summon men to action;
When enterprise embarks on speculation,
And bold manœuvres end in defalcation;

When millions wasted, by one man, for many,
Leave honest creditors without a penny:
The question is—not which may be the better,
The cheated bondsmen or their polished debtor—
But did blind fortune, in her computation,
By pure mistake, reach such a consummation,
And in despite of Blackstone, Coke, or Story,
Declare embezzlement his crown of glory?

Or, when two hotspurs, suddenly in passion,
Both deeply anxious to proceed in fashion,
Assail each other, first with weapons wordy,
Then straight prepare for combat still more sturdy;
So scouting suit for trespass or for trover,
One, with his bludgeon, knocks the other over;
Or, guarding closer that fantastic jewel,
Their outraged honor, perpetrate a duel;
In such a crisis, if each kills the other—
Which, in a sense, directly ends the pother;
Or if as nature sometimes seems to serve us,
In taking aim they grow a little nervous,
And after missing, one time with another,
Conclude it best their common grudge to smother—
So both retire, with equal halos spangled,
Perplexed to think about what whim they wrangled;
Or if, perchance, the one's more fatal firing
Brings down the other, bleeding and expiring:

The question is, with perfect satisfaction,
To solve the real aspect of the action.
Was it a game of bluster and bravado,
To see which proved the coolest desperado?
Or, minding not whose frame might be the thicker,
To try which man could dodge a ball the quicker?
Was it a contest of profound exertion,
To furnish fools a surgical diversion,
In which some power so artfully contrived it,
That by mistake one fell, and one survived it?
Or was it crime, in principal and second,
Whereby foul Murder one more victim reckoned?

Oh matchless ethics of the brave duello!
Oh noble Code! Some scoundrel of a fellow
Destroys your peace, or saps your reputation,
Then shoots you down, by way of expiation!

These cunning questions, subtler than a Shaster,
We, in our weakness, can't presume to master;
But turn them over, as much more befitting
Those sophists, who, by knack of fine hair-splitting,
Can twig a subject from the faintest inkling,
And solve the toughest problem in a twinkling!

Yet, passing by all casuistic cases,
There are events in which appear some traces

Of pure mistakes, so plainly past contention,
They need not vex the simplest comprehension.

In that great hour of courtship and of marriage—
Which none may question, none of right disparage—
By sheer mistake succeeds a bitter morrow,
And man's best privilege entails him sorrow.
When fond mamma, aflame with glowing fancies,
Revolves her daughter's eligible chances,
While she, the darling, waxing in her beauty,
Now grown impatient of all forms of duty,
Soon finds release from irksome tasks and tutors,
And straight beleaguered by a dozen suitors,
In conscious pride, determines on the measure,
Which must secure her heart its life-long treasure;
So when, between her hoping and her dreading,
When all is past—the wooing and the wedding—
As Hymen makes a husband from a lover,
She now begins her senses to recover:
And finds herself, in cruel bondage, fated,
To live with one decidedly ill-mated;
For time reveals, as on he rushes past her,
The vicious habits of her lord and master.
So he, who flattered with such words of honey,
Turns out to have no manners and no money;
He never buys her mantle, basque, or bonnet,
He never sings her now a tender sonnet!

The knave, who almost died of love to gain her,
Takes precious little trouble to retain her;
With brazen front, the cool, remorseless sinner
Scolds at his wife, and grumbles at his dinner;
Or, very busy at some club-carousal,
Forgets the angel of his first espousal;
And he, who deemed her presence once like heaven,
Scarce spends with her one evening out of seven!

Or may be, he himself was most deluded
In that affair, by nuptial rites concluded;
For, what is worse than phthisic or lumbago,
He now perceives he 's married a virago,
Who, by one stride of open usurpation,
Consigns his hopes to lasting obscuration!
She is no pliant spouse, who meekly stifles
Her mental light beneath domestic trifles;
But acting out the Biblical suggestion,
She holds her candle to each gravest question;
Of "woman's rights" becomes a grave expounder,
While giggling crowds, in mock respect, surround her!
He has no wife, but just an Incarnation
Of hair-brained schemes for public reformation!

Or may be, breaking nature's fairest pattern,
He finds his sweetheart turning out a slattern;
To economics blinder than a Cupid,

In household habits most perversely stupid;
And while neglect of such more homely matters,
By time and use, is bringing them to tatters,
Amid a squalor scarce above a hovel,
She 's deeply buried in the latest novel!

Or if, still more devoted to æsthetics,
And versed in pure Parisian homiletics—
Those points, so all important to converse on,
What latest styles may best become the person—
Her wardrobe filled by milliner and mercer,
Of some new mode each moon the sure precursor—
Yet through this monthly change so badly faring,
She still complains, "she 's nothing fit for wearing!"

Or, hugely charmed with some great star dramatic,
Or with some famous artiste operatic,
Forgetful now of him, who, worn and weary,
Comes home at night to find it lone and dreary,
She leaves her husband, through life's dull declension,
To mourn in vain his hapless circumvention;
And seeks new circles, there fresh conquests making,
While gay admirers feign their hearts are breaking.
So such affairs proceed, till some explosion
Reveals a chapter of the heart's corrosion;
And fate, unsealing here her darkest folio,
In grief displays the pitiful imbroglio!

'Tis truly wondrous how these charming witches—
To meet whose wants might cost a kingdom's riches—
Who spend their day in dreams of wild romancing,
Beguiling time with music, mirth, and dancing,
One's sober senses can so quickly addle,
By magic draughts of fairy fiddle-faddle;
Can stir a miser's stoic soul to court them,
His mint of money offered to support them;
Yea, lure a very anchorite to do it—
And ever after cause the man to rue it!

Yet if there be a bachelor in hearing,
He need not mock us with his cynic sneering:
We envy not the dismal route he 's taken
Alone through life, forsaking and forsaken!
For, though there be a voice of admonition,
And sad regret becomes almost contrition,
When such mistakes have spread their noxious leaven—
Yet do we wot of "matches made in Heaven!"

So, in that mooted, mystic operation,
Of what is termed "youth's proper education,"
Mistakes occur, which run, in swift succession,
Through all the mazes of life's long progression.
In olden times the rising generation
Were held to something like subordination.
It was supposed that beardless adolescence

Should be constrained to filial acquiescence;
It was supposed that parents and instructors,
Whom nature grants to children for conductors,
On their regards might have some lawful title,
In their obedience find some sweet requital;
It was supposed the young, in each condition,
Should yield to age and wisdom due submission;
That schools were made for public conservation,
To guard the mind and morals of the nation.

But now, reversing these old-fashioned notions,
It comes to pass, amid the world's commotions,
That, in a day of genius so precocious,
An age surpassing that of Burke or Grotius,
Young Solomons, of years from five to twenty,
Through town and hamlet may be found, in plenty.
'Mid social forms and fashions evanescent,
Folks now-a-days so soon get obsolescent;
Adults, at thirty, cease to be engaging,
And, without favor, are pushed off the staging;
The boy at nine berates his father roundly
For vain attempts to flog the urchin soundly—
Enormous outrage! threaten him with hiding!
So waxing warm with sharp and bitter chiding,
He'll not submit to such disgraceful dealings,
To have the old man hurt his fleshly feelings!
The girl at six, her mother's word eliding,

To pouting silence sombrely subsiding,
Convicts the madam of her great unkindness,
And wins a triumph from maternal blindness;
While, like a fortress thickly stowed with Paixhans,
The streets are filled with half-grown Anglo-Saxons;
And striplings, scarce beyond the time of nursing,
Assert their rights, in vollied rounds of cursing—
The noisy brats of that old tongue Teutonic,
A country's race of freemen embryonic!
So saucy youngsters, unrestrained and tameless,
Give course to mischiefs wholly wild and nameless;
Each hour's denouement makes the revelation,
And "Young America" brooks no dictation!

Nor less, it seems, in choice of occupation,
Do pure mistakes decide one's avocation.
For, though 'tis said that "men will find their level,"
In human states, what blank confusions revel!
If there be truth in such a declaration,
We 're often non-plussed for its illustration.
The maxim is, at least, so clearly thwarted
In some, who seem by wrong commissions sorted.
So many posts are held by men unfitted;
The wise are ousted by the underwitted;
The meekly good in lowly lots devoted,
The vain and proud to pompous ranks promoted;
The truly great in humble stations tethered,

The meanly small with public honors feathered;
Conceited minds, alive with false ambition,
Disdaining labor, in its slow fruition,
Presume to filch what nobler sons inherit,
And cope for prizes which they do not merit.

Not that we scorn, in any cast or station,
The honest fruits of labor's due creation.
The hands and heads that, with a tireless moiling,
In nature's crude and endless mine, are toiling,
For nobler use its dark alloys refining,
To loftier forms its plastic moulds combining;
These till our soil, or raise our vast constructions,
Adorning all with art's divine productions:
Such are the heroes whom mankind must cherish,
Till the last grandeurs of the earth shall perish.
Oh, not on these, in spleen ill-timed and narrow,
Shall sober satire spend her scathing arrow:
But for that thriftless horde so misappointed,
Who, in each frame of life, are quite disjointed—
What shall forbid her fiercest elocution,
When censure marks them for her retribution?

So, spurning all devices paragogic,
And all the lore of counsels phrenologic,
Quite out of joint the world seems onward rattling,
While each poor loon for some caprice is battling.

Thus first, appears a struggle somewhat fervent,
Between the master and his hopeful servant;
The household rights seem turning top for bottom,
And much in doubt it is which party 's got 'em;
The manual class, in nearly all their stages,
Now claim to dictate both their work and wages;
While shiftless herds, to better their positions,
Set up for singers, actors, and musicians;
And he, whose youth was barren and neglected,
His mind with lawless projects now infected,
His reckless schemes expanding somewhat broader,
Grown deaf to shame, breaks forth a bold marauder;
Or, holding views which some suppose are juster,
Becomes at last a rampant filibuster!
Then dolts and dunces, primping in wide collars,
Intrude themselves amid the ranks of scholars;
And sprigs of dull and torpid intuitions,
Aspire to flaunt as lawyers and physicians;
The brainless ninny, licensed by some quorum,
Spouts high-flown nonsense in each public forum;
One, without skill to carve a steak or sturgeon,
Yet fondly fancies he may be a surgeon;
And one, too weak with private cares to wrestle,
Would grasp and guide the Governmental Vessel!

But most of all, in that great realm of Printing,
Where ores of thought in massive forms are minting,

Whose sybil leaves these stirring times are shedding,
Whose tidings, borne on all the winds, are spreading;
In that great realm, whose starry lamps are burning,
To aid Religion, Politics, and Learning;
Whose groaning presses forge their glowing fulmen,
Of all earth's forces now the mighty culmen;
In that great realm, some editorial flunky,
Whose nature seems half jackal and half monkey,
Whose language vacates all the rules of grammar,
Whose style might cause the glibest tongue to stammer—
An utter novice in the world of Letters,
Whose head hirsute discloses to his betters
The ears of Midas and the horns of Bacchus,
A fitting mark for Juvenal or Flaccus;
A mingled vein of malice and of cunning
Through every fibre of his instincts running—
By some strange chance, which none would deem supernal,
Becomes at length, the owner of a Journal;
Ascends the tripod, grand and self-reliant,
At once felonious, venal, and defiant;
So, swelling up with masterly pretensions,
He puffs beyond his natural dimensions;
On soaring wings of swift imagination,
He spans all objects through the vast creation;
Concocting fables of ambiguous pathos,
Or writing columns of prodigious bathos;
Endowed in mind with stores of frothy lading,

All times and seasons find him gasconading;
Inspired by lucre in his windy traffic,
He sells his wares, in items paragraphic;
And while to pay him there 's a single stiver,
His fertile fancy proves a shrewd contriver—
The ready roorbacks crowd his smoking issues,
As many-patterned as a draper's tissues.
And who shall buy the reeking sheet, may judge it,
Of all things noisome, just the choicest budget.

Yet not alone may he endure the blaming
For wrong thus done, which will not bear the naming;
The feculence infused into his leaders,
Is quick devoured by greedy, gorging readers;
A thousand morbid appetites are waiting,
Which he, the pander, daily feeds to sating!

Woe-worth the day! woe-worth the land that bears them!
Woe-worth the hand, that in false pity spares them!
Of civil life the fungi parasitic,
Or grizzly spiders in their webs mephitic,
Or carrion-kites that, ripe for spoil and pillage,
From sea-board city to each inland village,
Descrying offal through their scent salacious,
Infest the country, gloating and rapacious!
Oh, dire mistake! Oh, strange infatuation!
When such a brood is hatched upon the nation,

Fomenting hatred in the breasts of yeomen,
And turning brethren into fiery foemen;
While Ruin's phantoms o'er the strife sit mocking,
And Freedom's empire to its base is rocking!

Yet, through the shadows which hang darkly rifting
Along the course, where Time's broad tide is drifting,
There still are those who, called with high vocation,
Shine like like the stars, to light their generation—
Anointed minds, whose rays serenely beaming,
Through all the concave with effulgence streaming,
Lift up mankind with purer aspirations,
And draw them on to nobler destinations.

Oh, such we hail! their well-earned fame confessing;
Great Brotherhood! Columbia's pride and blessing:
Their mighty cordon far away is looming,
From where Atlantic's thunder waves are booming,
To shores, where weary Day his languor pillows,
In fading light, on fair Pacific's billows.
They wield the functions which the Press dispenses;
They rear the bulwarks of our strong defences:
And though there be who, in their base prostration,
Arouse alike our fear and indignation,
Yet from all sad portents with gladness turning,
Some brighter prospect through the clouds discerning,
Above the storms, supreme in the ascendant,

We mark the Orbs that stud our sky resplendent:
In lofty eminence of proud ensamples,
Through rolling years gleam out their great examples.
One passing tribute may we humbly render
To such a virtue, in its sunset splendor.

Ten lustra now have measured their duration,
Since here, where stands the Delphi of the nation,
Two genial sons, in early manhood's vigor,
Drawn from the bosom of our western rigor,
Devoting life to sacred, calm discretion,
First struck the symbols of their high profession.

Go where the pile of olden time is seated,
Fit emblem of an age well nigh completed;
See now its windows, in their midnight glimmer,
Like friendly beacons, on the darkness shimmer;
While throned within, the "National" Penates,
Refined as Terence, faithful as Achates,
For truth and right each hour their task assuming,
The old "*Intelligencer*" are reluming!

So, through the sweep of conflict and mutation,
Its ample folios, needing no lustration,
To grateful households welcome lessons bearing,
No heart corrupting, and no mind ensnaring,
The guide of youth, the joy of men and matrons,

Both far and near, have found delighted patrons.
No cheek may blush, their chastened page perusing,
No soul may sicken, o'er their contents musing;
Their trumpet-call, in thrilling blast, sends greeting
To distant homes, where patriot blood is beating;
And when the hosts of fraud and faction surging,
The great Republic to the brink are urging,
The stoutest spirit of the land dismaying,
Their old voice rises, like a prophet praying!

Well done! ye grey-haired Nestors of the stylus!
Though perils threaten, and mistakes beguile us,
Long may ye live, your civic honors wearing—
By freemen loved, in freemen's honors sharing;
Long may ye drink the cup of Ganyméde,
Like Rome's great Anaces, the sons of Leda;
Long may ye move, serene in each condition,
Robust in age, still stainless in your mission;
Till, far advanced, life's evening shades are stealing,
And vesper bells from heaven's high towers are pealing
In silver tones, your obit to betoken;
O gently then the golden bowl be broken,
The ripened shock be bound by angel reapers,
And tears, our tribute, fall above the sleepers!

Yet not alone for pity or derision,
Do life's mistakes present their sterner vision:

For though, along Time's wide and troubled ocean,
They lie, like fragments of the waves in motion;
And though they sweep, like curbless winds, careering
Through soul and sense, earth's fairest fruitage searing;
There is a power of strange recuperation,
A power which mocks their direst desolation.
The world's strong heart, tho' with their sorrows aching,
In every throe to grander life is waking!
Ay, men may fall, and kingdoms sink to ashes,
Yet, from the smouldering heap, there ever flashes
Another day-spring, o'er the Ages glancing,
The herald-light of nobler deeds advancing.

So from the charnel greatness of Chaldea,
The storied dust of Athens and Platæa,
From Rome's vast ruins, in their blight decaying,
Where feeble kings are broken sceptres swaying,
From fields that once with war's grim vollies thundered,
And lands once fair, which his red hand has plundered,
A prophet voice comes, like a tocsin knolling,
The doom of States misguided, o'er us rolling.
We live to-day to profit by their warning,
We live to hail fair Freedom's brighter morning;
While o'er its dawn the great Confederation,
Star after star, flings forth its constellation;
And weary millions, on its glory gazing,
One wild acclaim of kindled hope are raising!

Then be it ours, in all our vast gradations,
With patient vigils, ceaseless supplications,
To bear, each man, his own appointed burden,
Assured that soon or late, some better guerdon,
In our behoof from each mistake returning,
Must crown our martyr faith and hero yearning:
So shall we come, 'mid all this scene factitious,
Of shadowy pomps no more to be ambitious;
And, strong in right, through fortunes glad or gory,
We 'll make our failures stepping-stones to glory!

'T was he whose birth this hour is now recalling,
While o'er his tomb a nation's grief is falling—
He of the silver tongue and lordly bearing,
With Cato's justice and Achilles' daring—
Who stood so long his country's first debater,
Trough all her strifes, "the great pacificator"—
Her Senate's eagle, ever sunward sweeping,
While souls were thrilled, and eyes were wet with weeping:
'T was he who said, with noble self-denial,
When sorely pressed in fortune's latest trial,
"Let me be right!"—his thoughts dishonor spurning,
With patriot fire his lofty spirit burning:
When closed the day which brought defeat around him,
Still calm and brave as e'er its morn had found him,
While hope had fled, and faithful friends were routed,
"Ay, rather right than President!" he shouted.

Then raise to him, though now he deeply slumbers,
Oh, raise to him, from all your growing numbers,
Some cenotaph, some marble monumental,
Sons of this soil, this Empire occidental!
Preserve the fame which shines upon its portal—
Your CLAY'S proud fame, already made immortal!

Oh, favored Land! hear thou his word resounding
On all thy hills, in all thy valleys bounding;
Thou last and greatest daughter of the Ages,
The mother fair of statesmen, heroes, sages;
Their mighty shades shall watch above thy mountains,
Their echoes linger o'er thy fields and fountains,
Their august presence still thine altars warding,
From dark invasion all thy treasures guarding—
Heir of all Time! these are their salutations,
"Be right! Be right! O Peerless of the Nations!"

FINIS.